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BUCHENWALD.

A Preliminary Report

by

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and

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NOTE: Special distribution is being made of this report because preliminary evaluation indicates that it is one of the most significant accounts yet written on an aspect of life in Nazi Germany.

It is NOT just another report on a concentration camp. It does not deal exclusively with the horror of life in Buchenwald, nor with the brutalities of the Nazi perverts. It is the story of wheels within wheels. It tells how the prisoners themselves organized a deadly terror within the Nazi terror.

The report is obviously controversial. It has not been possible in so short a time to cross-check and weigh every detail. But independent investigation leads to the tentative conclusion that the basic story can be accepted. Later study and interrogation may lead to modification of this picture -- one way or the other. But one thing is certain: There will have to be further investigation of the people of this and all concentration camps. Because the report makes it clear that in our search for decent, democratic elements which we can trust in Germany we cannot accept at face value ALL those people who were incarcerated for opposing the Nazi brand of fascism.

Alfred Toombs
Chief of Intelligence

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. The full truth about BUCHENWALD will never be known. To approach it a large staff of interrogators would be necessary, as well as some means of protecting witnesses. The look of terror in the eyes of inmates when certain questions were asked was not lost on the writers. Names of informants are not given in this report. They are still in BUCHENWALD, and would undoubtedly be in the gravest danger if what they have said ever becomes known there. The major informants are two Allied intelligence agents who were caught by the Germans.
2. The writers first learned of the liberation of BUCHENWALD as they were riding down a forest road with an American column. They turned a corner onto a main highway, and saw thousands of ragged, hungry-looking men, marching in orderly formations, marching East. These men were armed, and had leaders at their sides. Some platoons carried German rifles. Some platoons had PANZERFAUSTS on their shoulders. Some carried "potato masher" hand grenades. They laughed and waved wildly as they walked. Or their captains saluted gravely for them. They were of many nationalities, a platoon of French, followed by a platoon of Spaniards, platoons of Russians, Poles, Jews, Dutch, mixed platoons. Some wore striped convict suits, some ragged uniforms of the United Nations, some shreds of civilian clothes. These were inmates of BUCHENWALD, walking out to war as tanks swept by at 25 miles per hour.
3. They were ordered to return to their camp by a tank officer. They did so, though many seemed disappointed. They wanted to know where the Germans were. They wanted to kill. The interrogators turned back towards BUCHENWALD, which lay close on the main road. At the gates of the camp were sentries. In the camp was a Camp Commandant, a German inmate. In the camp were 21,000 survivors who cheered at the sight of an American uniform, rushed out to shake hands, and threw valuable binoculars from their slave workshops at the passing troops. Yet in the camp there reigned order. Meals were served. Armed guards - inmates - patrolled the somber grounds, and wildly excited groups of men calmed at a word from these in authority.
4. That evening the interrogators attended a meeting of the Camp Directorate and of the Council. Then they were provided with beds in Block 50, the Typhus Experiment Laboratory, where victims of typhus injections were observed as they died. In the morning they were awakened by a brass band, which serenaded them until they appeared at the windows, to be cheered by several thousand inmates. Later they were present at a huge parade of part of the camp's inhabitants, and addressed them over a loudspeaker system. It was an incredible experience, as hard to forget as the sight of the camp's crematorium, the fresh corpses, and the living dead of the so-called "small camp." It was the rebirth of humanity in a bestial surrounding.
5. The immediate problems of BUCHENWALD are food and medicine. When American troops entered, there had been no bread for three days. The Nazis removed most of the food supply before leaving. Regular sources of supply are being visited by an inmate driving a car, who already has an MG pass. But these in the neighborhood cannot suffice. Five or six thousand of the survivors are critically ill. Dysentery, typhus and phlegmonia are the most important diseases. Medical supplies are very low.

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B. EVACUATION

1. That there are 21,000 survivors of BUCHENWALD exceeds the hopes of most. It seemed more likely that the SS would bend every effort to liquidating the traces of its activities. The Nazis did succeed to evacuate over half of BUCHENWALD. Their failure to complete evacuation was partly due to the surprise advance of the 4th Armd. Div, partly to a complicated pattern of resistance within the camp and reluctance within the SS organization itself. The entire camp was supposed to be evacuated on 11 April, the day American troops arrived. The camp's last meal had been ordered for 0800 that morning. On previous days the following evacuations had been carried out:

- 3 April 1,500 mixed inmates, to THE LESIENSTADT
- 5 April 3,105 Jews, destination unknown
- 6-10 April Total of 22, 080, including 1,800 Russians with PW status, evacuated 10 April. Supposed destinations DACHAU and FLOSSENBURG.

2. The evacuation columns marched on foot, accompanied by SS guards. The routes are believed to run East to the vicinity of LEIPZIG. One column of 5,000 prisoners passed along the main road running East from JENA, leaving an unmistakable trail of discarded clothing behind it. American fighter planes patrolled overhead, keeping the columns in view but withholding fire. A number of prisoners managed to escape en route, and are wandering the forests East of JENA.

3. On 2 April the SS Commander, PISTER, held a meeting of the German police trustees of the camp, and announced that unless he received orders to the contrary he would not evacuate the inmates. He intended, he said, to remain and hand the camp over to the Americans. On the following day, however, he issued an order for all Jews to be separated out and prepared to leave on transport. A few Jews reported voluntarily. The rest, knowing the transports would probably end in death, simply hid in the barracks. At the same time the Communist group in the camp began to plan a general mutiny. It had at its disposal about three machine guns, fifty rifles and a number of hand grenades, all stolen from the guards and hidden about the camp over a period of years. This was, however, completely insufficient to sustain an open revolt. The regular SS Deaths Head guard at the camp was 1,700. In addition, reinforcements of 4,300 ordinary SS troops came in from WEIMAR to defend the forest area around the camp in the last few days before its fall. However, they were able to undertake certain sabotage measures. They spread the word that all inmates were to continue to resist evacuation, and that they were to be assisted by the trustee organization. Since much of the internal police of the camp was in the hands of the Communist trustees, this order made it almost impossible for the SS to find specific individuals.

4. The next day (3 April) the Jews were ordered to fall out at a camp parade and were told to go to the ruined factory buildings (destroyed in an air raid in August 1944 during which not one of the surrounding barracks were damaged) in the camp. Some went to this area, but later broke away from the SS guards. The latter gave half-hearted chase, shooting only a handful. That night,

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however, the SS managed to lay its hands on 3-4,000 of the 6,000 Jews in the camp. It also became known in the camp that 46 men were on a special list for immediate execution. The list included the Camp Elder No 1 (senior trustee), several other prominent Communist trustees, some Frenchmen and others. All 46 were warned and went into hiding. The list disappeared from the camp office. The men were not found, since the camp was searched only by the police trustees (LAGERSCHUTZ).

5. Then came an order for 4,000 to be evacuated. The mutiny became open. Whole blocks refused to come out. Thereupon the SS guards entered the enclosure area and rounded up about 3,000 of the prisoners, in some barracks having to throw them bodily out of windows. On Saturday, 7 April, orders came from BERLIN for the complete evacuation of the camp, if possible by the following Monday. That Sunday the first large transport left, consisting of about 5,000 men. On Monday ten thousand were taken away, and on Tuesday, 10 April, another ten thousand or so were moved off, including most of the Russians having PW status and many French. These two were considered the backbone of the resistance movement, and it was hoped that thereafter there would be less difficulty.

6. On the morning of 11 April small arms fire was audible in the camp, announcing the imminent approach of American troops. The lead tanks of the American unit were visible from the camp at 1300. About 1430, American tanks were attacking the immediate vicinity. The SS troops began a hasty retreat, after receiving orders to move in small groups to a reassembly point at SUESSEN-BORN. At the same time the inmates brought their arms into the open and began to take control of the camp. Informants are not unanimous as to what happened then. The Communist group claims that SS troops were still on guard in the watch towers around the camp, and that these were stormed by the prisoners. Others say that there was no actual fighting between inmates and SS until the American troops had seized control of the area. It is, however, agreed that the prisoners captured 78 guards, mostly in the woods near the camp.

7. Besides the Communist-led plan to take over the camp, there was another scheme, worked out by certain Western European nationals independently, which played some part in the survival of the remaining prisoners. This consisted of playing on the feelings of the camp commander, to encourage him to continue delaying the evacuation. On Sunday morning, 8 April, an inmate left the camp and donned the uniform of a German Air Force EM. He went to WEIMAR and mailed a letter. The letter was based on information to the effect that Allied parachute agents had been dropped between EISENACH and ERWURT, and had not been captured. It was addressed to the commandant of BUCHENWALD, and stated: "A special mission has been dropped in your area. We know of the scandal and terrors of OHRDRUF. We also know that there has been an improvement in your camp since the time of KOCH (PISTER's predecessor). At the moment our tank commanders are on the way to bring you to account. You must cease sending evacuation transports from BUCHENWALD. You must cease at once. You have one more chance."

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8. The letter was received by PISAR on Monday, and appears to have had a great effect on him. However, an order arrived from BERLIN, insisting on evacuation and threatening that if he disobeyed he would be turned over to the Security Police (SICHERHEITSDIENST). The Commandant continued evacuating but did not make use of the harsh measures which lay within his power, and which would have resulted in the speedy removal of all inmates.

C. PRESENT GOVERNMENT

1. The evening of their arrival the interrogators were invited to attend a meeting of the Camp Council. This is a large body, composed of about fifty people. It consists of one delegate for each thousand inmates of the same nationality, or fraction thereof. The Council met in a long, low room, formerly an SS mess hall. German was the predominant language. But each group had its own interpreter, who translated as the meeting progressed. When a speaker finished a sentence a low murmur of French, Russian and Czech could be heard from the interpreters. Apart from the surroundings, this could have been a meeting of a committee of the League of Nations. The business of the evening was the organization of the camp. Commissions had been appointed to take charge of Security (police and guards), Food, Sanitation, Clothing, Administration and Information. As the interrogators entered a report was being rendered by one of the Committees: "Comrades, tomorrow will be the first holiday in the history of BUCHENWALD. We will have real goulash for lunch!" The announcement was met by applause.

2. The floor was thrown open for discussion. A Spanish delegate protested that there were not enough guards around the SS prisoners. He was told that there were twelve guards posted, sufficient for the 80-odd prisoners. Another delegate complained that the "bandits" were breaking out of the "small camp" (see below). He was promised that the guard would be increased. A Dutch delegate stated that the men of his country were eager to help defend the camp, but had not been called on. He was referred to the Security Commission.

The regular business was interrupted while a short summary of the organization progress was given for the benefit of the visitors. Besides the large committee, there is a directorate consisting of five men from the biggest national groups, a German, Russian, Frenchman, Czech and "Roman", representing the Italians, Spaniards and Belgians. (Note: The absence of a Pole is perhaps significant, the number of Poles in the camp being very large.) In addition, the camp's prisoner-trustee system has been retained as the executive branch of its government. At its head is the Camp Elder (LAGER-ÄLTSTE EINS), a German Communist named Hans EIDEN, who has taken over the duties of Camp Commander. As the SS left, EIDEN emerged from his hiding place to issue the first order over the loud-speaker system: "Attention! Attention! This is the Camp Elder. All are to remain in the blocks. The gates remain closed. Further instructions follow."

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4. Soon after came a second order: "Attention! Attention! This is the Camp Elder, speaking for the Camp Committee, which includes representatives of all nations. (1) The SS has left the camp. (2) Representatives of all nations have formed a Camp Leadership. Their orders are to be obeyed unconditionally. (3) All are to remain in the blocks. Keep the gates closed. (4) All food, all clothing is the property of the camp's inmates. Whoever molests this property will be punished as a looter. (5) All camp functionaries will remain at their posts, and will continue their work to maintain order and the routine supply of the camp.

5. Guards were posted within the camp, and armed troops were hastily formed. By evening there were 1,500 carrying captured and abandoned German arms. These were first sent out in the direction of WEIMAR. Later, after orders were received from American officers, they were drawn back into the area surrounding the camp. The German troops occupied the Eastern approaches, the Russians the West, and the others the Northern and Southern sectors. Cooks remained on duty, and there was a project afoot for repairing the camp's water supply system, which had to be discouraged because the damage was in territory still in German hands. Seventy-eight SS men were made prisoners, mostly captured by the camp inmates in the woods, a few found sneaking off disguised as inmates.

6. Thus, instead of a heap of corpses, or a disorderly mob of starving, leaderless men, the Americans found a disciplined and efficient organization in BUCHENWALD. Credit is undoubtedly due to the self-appointed Camp Committee, an almost purely Communist group under the domination of the German political prisoners. They have made themselves almost indispensable to the American authorities who will have the task of managing the 21,000 survivors of BUCHENWALD. Earlier in the history of the camp these same people made themselves indispensable to the SS in managing the 60,000 prisoners normally kept at this focal center of the concentration camp system.

D. CONTROL OF BUCHENWALD

1. To understand this predominance of German Communists and to evaluate its significance, a brief survey of the camp's political history may be useful. BUCHENWALD was established in 1937, and was then exclusively for German prisoners. There were three types of prisoners, politicals (among whom Communists predominated), criminals, and Jews. The first years of the camp were its most terrible period. Beatings and killings were innumerable, as the SS guards tried to force the inmates to work faster at building barracks and installations. Gradually, however, there came a period of stabilization as the camp neared its present size. Unable to manage the prisoners alone, particularly as foreigners began to arrive, the SS instituted a system of "self-administration" (SELBSTVERWALTUNG), culminating early in 1943 in the appointment of police-trustees (LAGERSCHUTZ) from among the inmates.

2. The trustees had wide powers over their fellow-inmates. At first they were drawn almost exclusively from the German criminals. This period lasted until 1942. But gradually the Communists began to gain control of this organization. They were the oldest residents, with records of 10-12 years in the concentration camps, and thus began to build up personal relationships and experience which made them the most logical appointees for positions of power. They clung together with remarkable tenacity, whereas the criminal elements were simply out for their own individual welfare, and had little group cohesiveness. The Communist maintained excellent discipline, and received a certain amount of direction from outside the camp. They had brains and technical qualifications for running the various industries established at the camp. They made themselves indispensable. At BUCHENWALD the German Communist group now numbers about 300, the survivors of years of brutality and extermination.

3. Their advances were not made without resistance from the criminals, but gradually the criminals were eliminated from power, partly by intimidation, partly with the aid of the SS. Numbers of the criminals were killed by beatings, hangings, or injections of phenol into the heart, or of air or milk into the veins. The injections were a specialty of the camp doctor, who became a partisan of the Communist factions. The arrival of large transports of Poles from AUSCHWITZ in 1943 was the next challenge to the Communist rule. In AUSCHWITZ the Poles had occupied more or less the same ruling position as the Communists now had in BUCHENWALD. They attempted to capture the same sort of control in their new home. According to one informant their effort was crushed by the killing of large numbers in the typhus experiment station.

4. Towards the end of the year big transports of French and Belgians began to arrive. Because of their Western outlook, these too represented a menace to the German Communist rule. Almost all of the first convoys were shipped immediately to the dreaded DORA camp, which meant almost certain death. Of the remainder, any who dared complain were placed immediately on transport. The two Frenchmen who worked in the "ARBEITSSTATISTIK" office, and who thus were directly responsible for the fate of many of their countrymen, were named SCHWARTZ and SCHMULEVSKY (?), the latter a naturalized Pole. The French, furthermore, seemed to break more quickly under the strain of concentration camp life, and many simply resigned themselves to death. Later, the German Communists selected a French Communist named Marcel PAUL (a town councillor in Paris), and established him as "representative" of the French inmates. PAUL, in turn, appointed a "French Committee", composed of a number of former French deputies, including FORCINAL, THOMAS and MARIE (the latter a Radical Socialist who later resigned). A certain "Colonel MANKES" a resistance leader who was captured by the Germans after a number of blunders, was made President of this Committee.

5. The Committee did nothing about the Red Cross parcel scandal. The French Red Cross sent thousands of parcels to its compatriots in BUCHENWALD, the French being one of the few nationalities to receive such aid. These parcels, however, did

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not reach their destination. The German Communist organization decided that all prisoners were comrades in the camp, and therefore all should share alike in any parcels which were received. The camp commander agreed, and all parcels were turned over by him to the Communist Camp Elder No 1. He in turn saw to the distribution of the parcels among the individual block leaders, who were supposed to divide them up among the inmates of their block. The Camp Commander was somehow convinced that the French were a trouble-making element, and made known that he would not listen to their complaints. The French were also forced to "voluntarily" surrender private parcels addressed directly to them. Those who protested or refused went on the transport lists. The division of the common fund of parcels was by no means scrupulous. The German trustees always seemed to have more than the ordinary inmates. American tinned milk, for example, which arrived in parcels received in December, was still being consumed by German inmates in March. The Germans had more to smoke and more to eat than any others, provided they belonged to the ruling party. Even now, they may be distinguished from the rest of the inmates by their rosy cheeks and robust health, though they have been in concentration camps for much longer periods than the others.

E. METHOD OF ORGANIZATION

1. Above the ostensible leaders of the trustee system was a group of "mystery men". These took no prominent positions, but stayed in the background, acting as a political directorate. They received orders and information from outside the camp, and passed on orders and slogans to the Communist inmates. The German Communist Party maintained an extraordinarily effective organization, covering the whole country. But it was used only for liaison, and was not risked on more active work. From BUCHENWALD an inmate went out regularly to establish contact with a Communist courier bringing news and instructions. Bound by his loyalty to his Party, the contact man never made use of his opportunity to escape personally.

2. In September 1944 the Communists even began some sort of plot within BUCHENWALD to establish a new German government. Very little is known of this, but the following story has been heard. An Austrian Communist, GUSTAV WEGERER, was the central figure in the conspiracy, aided by the former Camp Elder No 1, ROESCHKE. WEGERER was an important Communist who had spent much time in Russia. Together with other Austrians and Germans, mainly employed around the Property Room (EFFEKTENKAMMER), a Communist stronghold, he established contact with the Communist cells at the DORA and SACHSENHAUSEN camps. One night the group began to drink in the Property Room, and commenced talking indiscreetly in the presence of an Austrian named STRAAT (who falsely claims to be a naturalized English citizen). STRAAT told a criminal prisoner, who informed the SS. The information was passed on to the camp's Political Department, and from there to the GESTAPO. Eight of the men involved were called out, followed by others, including the present KAPE-EFFEKTENKAMMER (Property Room Trustee). All were sent to the GESTAPO in WEIMAR, and were struck off (ABGESETZT) the strength reports of the camp, an ominous move which usually meant death. At about the same time the brother of the present BUCHENWALD Property Room Trustee hanged himself in the DORA camp, and a number of Communist inmates were arrested, while 36 German Communists were arrested and killed in the SACHSENHAUSEN concentration camp. Three weeks later ROESCHKE, then Camp Elder No 1 at BUCHENWALD, was also arrested with several others. ROESCHKE was accused of indirect complicity because he failed to prevent the plot. Much to the surprise of the other inmates, a number of the men arrested from BUCHENWALD were later returned alive to the camp.

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3. Besides the top positions in the trustee organization, there were a number of key Communist strongholds in the administration of the camp. One was the food supply organization, through which favored groups received reasonable rations while others were brought to the starvation level. A second was the hospital (REVIER), staffed almost exclusively by Communists. Its facilities were largely devoted to caring for members of their party. All scarce drugs (and many were scarce at BUCHENWALD) were reserved for Communist patients, and hospital food was available for members of the Party even if not absolutely necessary. Another Communist stronghold was the property room (EFFEKTENKAMMER). Here came all the personal property of new prisoners going through the disinfection plant, down to their religious medallions, as well as of inmates who died at BUCHENWALD. Money and gold (including gold teeth from the dead or dying) was placed in a safe, and was carted away by the SS in suitcases a few nights ago. Other goods of lesser value were distributed by the Communists. Each Russian PW, for example, received a wrist-watch as a token of solidarity. Each German trustee obtained good clothing and numerous other valuables: the Communists of BUCHENWALD, after ten or twelve years in concentration camps, are dressed like prosperous business men. Some affect leather jackets and little round caps reminiscent of the German navy, apparently the uniform of revolution.

4. But the key position of power was the Labor Office (ARBEITSSSTATISTIK). Here assignments were made and transports were put together. Though this function was nominally performed by an SS Labor Allocation (ARBEITSEINSATZ) officer, the details usually devolved on the trustees working in the office. These were usually instructed only as to the number of prisoners required for a particular transport, and were left to choose the names themselves. Thus the trustees, who in time became almost exclusively Communist Germans, had the power of life and death over all other inmates. They could sentence a man or a group to almost certain death, by assignment to one of the bad transports.

5. The Communist trustees were directly responsible for a large part of the brutalities committed at BUCHENWALD. Not all the beatings and killings were done by the SS guards. Among Communists named as having participated are:

(a) HAUPTMANN, assistant Camp Chief (KONTROLLEUR). Eye-witness testifies that HAUPTMANN kicked prisoners in the testicles and beat them, but always stopped when under observation of certain individuals known to have connections outside the camp. HAUPTMANN speaks English well, and now acts as official greeter for visiting Americans. He talks like a sadist, his eyes gleaming with pleasure as he tells how "we disciplined this camp". Like many of the Communist leaders, "discipline" is his favorite word.

(b) Property Room Chief (KAPO-EFFEKTENKAMMER), HEINZ BAUSCH.

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(c) DIETSCH, SAPO of Block 46, the injection block. Characterized as a "private executioner".

(d) Block Chief of Block 14.

Of categories, too numerous to be mentioned by name, the following may be cited:

(a) Almost all police trustees (LAGERSCHUETZ)

(b) Almost all Block Chiefs in the "small ramp". Besides personally beating their charges, these individuals sometimes forced whole blocks to stand barefoot in the snow for hours, apparently on their own initiative.

6. Not all Communist leaders are bad. The present Camp Elder No. 1 is generally respected as an honest and good man. There are a number of others who win universal regard, including the present food officer. But these men follow the orders of the shadowy political directorate which placed them in power, and are disciplined to do nothing to hurt their party comrades.

7. The Communists' excuse for their conduct (obtained at second-hand, since no Communist admitted more than that the "criminal" elements were roughly dealt with in the struggle for power) is entirely logical. The camp lived under an unspeakable reign of terror until they took power. (Not: Under Commandant KOCH this was true. His removal from office coincided roughly with the rise of Communist influence. Whether there is a connection between the two could not be determined.) They assumed office to make BUCHENWALD a better place to live. To be able to do so, they had to produce a certain output of work, order, and discipline. Thus their means were justified by the end. The Communists' motives, in so far as such things can be reconstructed, are entirely human. Only the fittest could survive twelve years of concentration camp. Fitness consisted of convincing the SS of one's usefulness, and in the fight for survival this trait was bound to appear. Sustained by the sacred egoism of their mission, by the thought of living to shape a Communist Germany, they lost their human idealism. They became hard, surviving not for themselves but in the name of the proletarian future of Germany, and thereby justifying many extreme means of survival. To them most of the other inmates are "bandits". They consider themselves almost the sole valuable residue of the great process of selection which was the concentration camp system.

F. GROUPS OTHER THAN COMMUNIST

1. Besides the Communists, there were two other groups in BUCHENWALD who were well organized and disciplined. The first was the Czechs. A large number of Czechs, so-called Protectorate Prisoners (PROTEKTORAT-HAFTLINGE) were arrested at the outbreak of the war as possibly dangerous. They had a certain privileged status, at least until 1940, and still wear a distinctive red armband. At first they were not required to work. Later they were assigned to the more choice jobs. The Czechs organized a national committee of their own, representing all factions from right to left in a democratic manner.

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2. The second was the Russians having PW status (i.e., not including PW's sentenced to the concentration camp for attempting to escape or refusing to work). They were about 800 in number, after numerous mass executions (see Annex) had decimated their ranks. Though kept in separate blocks, and distinguished by not having to wear concentration camp numbers, they were treated exactly like the other inmates. Among them were a number of high officers, including from two to six colonels. Military discipline was maintained, and the group kept pretty much to itself. In the early days they were terribly treated. Large numbers were killed at the camp. Later, as part of the general change with the removal of KOCH, their lot was bettered. Relations between the German Communists and Russian PW's were peculiar. The senior Russian officer, as representative of the workers' fatherland, had great influence over the German Communists. His word was law. However, he made little use of this advantage. Most of the Russian PW's were evacuated before the Americans arrived.

3. There were thousands of non-German Communists in BUCHENWALD, particularly French, Dutch and Spanish. To some extent these were absorbed into the German organization, and took their orders from the Germans. A vast underground system of councils and meetings was built up to integrate them. Yet many did not like their German overlords. Many Russians and foreign communists spoke of beating up the German Communists when the day of liberation arrived. Their hopes will have to be deferred. By their "coup d'etat" within the camp, the German Communists remain masters over all the inmates, with rifles in their own hands to replace the support once offered by the SS.

G. ATROCITIES

1. Though in the last few years BUCHENWALD became the best of the German concentration camps, it has its share of the horrors associated with the system. Some of these are detailed in the appendix to this report, a copy of a document prepared by the camp council at the request of the writers. The worst of these occurred during the time of the infamous KARL KOCH as camp commandant. KOCH is famous as "Femme Koch". Both he and his wife were perverses, the husband a homosexual and the wife a nymphomaniac. Both satisfied their desires on the hapless inmates. The wife would walk through the camp, pick a likely partner, take him home for the night, and then invariably order him shot. She delighted in tattoos. Prisoners were regularly inspected in the hospital. Whenever a prisoner was found with a more than ordinary tattoo he was killed, his skin was stripped, and the tattooed portion was canned. Some extraordinary objects were made from these, including a famous lamp shade. In September 1943 KOCH was arrested for abuse of authority and fraudulent conversion of Party funds. He has been in custody ever since. According to some prisoners he was brought back to BUCHENWALD four days ago and was shot. An urn bearing his name on a piece of adhesive tape can be seen at the camp's crematorium. His successor, PISTER, tended to do what was required to meet the demands of Berlin, and introduced relatively decent conditions in at least part of the camp. No longer, for example, was the entire camp deprived of food for three days, if the output of work slacked off. Lately the entire SS has become relatively mild, and tried to curry favor with the Communist faction, expecting an Allied victory.

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2. Another important figure in the time of KOCH was Dr. WALDEMAR HOVEN, camp physician from 1939-1943. HOVEN was captured by the Americans and is now lodged in the concentration camp. When interrogated he gave the following story: He was arrested about the time that KOCH was imprisoned, and was charged with murder. As he explains it, he could not bear to see the criminal prisoners systematically killing off the political and racial inmates of the camp, with the encouragement of the commander. HOVEN picked criminal prisoners who acted as KAROJ, and killed them with injections. Prisoners confirm his story, and state that HOVEN saved numerous prisoners by declaring them sick and hiding them in the hospital. Other inmates, though agreeing to these facts, add that HOVEN also killed political and racial prisoners with his injections. Dr. HOVEN was condemned to death by a Nazi court, but was reprieved, and remained in jail for about 18 months. He was returned to the camp on 15 March, 1945, apparently because of the shortage of doctors. His old rank, SS-HAUPTSTURMFUEHRER, was returned to him. He is known to have continued to help some prisoners.

3. HOVEN gives the impression of being a psychopathic case. When the interrogators met him he cried, claiming to be overjoyed at seeing a few Jewish inmates whose lives he had saved. On the other hand, Dr. HOVEN was responsible for the cruelties committed in the typhus laboratory, where hundreds of healthy prisoners were burned with phosphorus for experimental reasons, dying in great pain. Since returning to the camp, HOVEN has renewed his friendship with the Communist faction, apparently as a form of life insurance in the event of an Allied victory. In return the Communists seem anxious to keep him alive, ostensibly because of the information he can provide. He was always considered their friend because of his dispatch of the criminal faction.

4. The Experiment Station in BUCHENWALD included a typhus experiment station, housed in Block 50. Here an attempt was made to find a cure for the dread disease, an attempt which was not successful. The victims were kept in Block 46, the injection block. In 1944 a new experiment was introduced, the burning of prisoners with phosphorus in an attempt to find an antidote. Lately experiments had begun to try to find a cure for homosexuality, using prisoners who were thus afflicted.

5. The Crematorium BUCHENWALD boasts a large, modern crematorium, with six ovens, a tiled floor, and an elevator which brought live men to the torture chamber in the cellar, and hauled up their corpses later to be burned. The torture chamber was cleaned up by the SS before the Americans arrived. Its walls are freshly painted to cover blood stains; and the row of meat hooks along the ceiling, on which the living victims were impaled, has been removed. The holes from which the hooks were taken have been plastered over. But the evidence of the purpose of this plant is not completely gone. There are large piles of bone and ash, not yet concealed. And outside, in the courtyard, are thirty or so bodies, not yet burned. These are typical concentration camp bodies, unbelievably thin, scarred, beaten. In one corner lies a stretcher with two of these pitiful bodies on it head to foot, bulking smaller than one healthy man. On the second floor of the plant are about 1,200 sealed tin cans. These rattle when shaken. They contain the ashes of prisoners murdered in 1939 and 1940, for which there had been no claimants. After that the nicety of separate urns was no longer considered necessary, and only in rare cases were

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ashes of individuals preserved. Almost all remains went into a common pile, which was allowed to accumulate. When it got too large, five or six trucks would come to haul it away to a pit in the nearby forest.

6. In the last four weeks the coal shortage forced suspension of the crematorium. About 2,500 who died in this period were simply buried near the camp's BISMARCK guard tower. Capacity of the crematorium was about 3-400 bodies every 24 hours, and sometimes even these facilities were strained. In the month of February, for example, 2,800 were cremated. The chief of the crematorium, also responsible for the torture chamber in its basement, was SS-Hauptscharfuehrer WANNSTEDT. There was also a stable near the camp, used for occasional mass shootings. Here thousands were disposed of, particularly P/W transports from the East in the early years of the war. About a week ago the SS made preparations to blow this up. The place still stands, but may be mined.

H. THE SMALL CAMP

1. The greatest horror of BUCHENWALD is its "small camp", a concentration camp which has not been liberated. The "small camp" (KLEINES LAGER) is a barbed wire enclosure in the center of the big camp. This was the quarantine center for new admissions to the main camp. But its main function in recent years has been to act as replacement center for the "transports", the death camps (MORDLAGER) where undesirables were killed by beatings and work. To the transport system went the hordes of petty people who had no value as hostages and were not worth keeping at the main concentration camps. These were Jews, foreign workers or prisoners who tried to escape or stole food, gypsies, petty criminals from all over Europe, minor political figures, and those major political figures who were marked for death.

2. All were reduced to an unbelievably low common denominator by the torture and starvation of the transport system. Whether MICHELIN the French tire magnate (now evacuated or dead), or ISAAC, the Rumanian Jew, a few months in the system made them indistinguishable, filthy, whining, clamoring bodies, covered with sores, which seem to be without souls. Transports returned to the small camp at regular intervals, for replacement and (relative) recuperation of those who were still considered useful as workers. Those who were not fit for work (ARBEITSUNFAEHIG) were weeded out here and killed. The rest stayed for a while, then went on another transport. Sooner or later they died.

3. Even now, a trip through the little camp is like a nightmare. On the sight of an American uniform a horde of gnomes and trolls seems to appear like magic, pouring out of doorways as if shot from a cannon. Some hop on crutches. Some hobble on stumps of feet. Some run with angular movements. Some glide like Oriental genies. Almost all wear striped convict suits, covered with patches, or grey-black remnants of Eastern clothing. The universal covering is a little black skull cap. They doff these ceremoniously to the visitors. Some are crying, others shouting with joy. An old man, dirty, bearded, one eye blind, totters up and introduces himself as a French general. His son is dying here. Can help be brought? Will it come in time? A child of twelve smiles and says, "I am from Poland. I have been in concentration camps for two years now."

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4. Most remarkable is the sight of the children, six to fourteen, most about twelve. They rush about, shrieking and playing, playing where the smell of death is still thick in the air. There are seven hundred children in BUCHENWALD, most in the small camp. There is even a baby, three years old. Conditions in the small camp are incredible. In the main camp there are solid barracks, clean and well made. In the small camp are twenty-seven low wooden barns. In these are three to five tiers of wide shelves, running the length of the building. On them are sacks of rotten straw, covered with vermin. These are sleeping and living quarters. In the center of the camp are open sheds, covering deep concrete-lined pits. These are the latrines, from which pour an indescribable stench.

5. The rated capacity of each of the blocks here is 450. Loaded down with 450 the barracks look like the interior of a slave ship. Yet 1,000-1,200 newly arrived East Jews and Poles were often crowded in here. Daily mortality was high, 20-25 per block per day. Once 160 out of 1,000 died in Block 57 within 24 hours. The Block Chiefs of the small camp are Germans, and are considered the most brutal of the inmates.

6. Part of the small camp was once the "tent camp", consisting of canvas shelters which were later replaced by poorly constructed barracks. Here 170 American aviators were brought, after being captured in France while attempting to escape. Their shoes were taken away, and in the dead of winter they slept under canvas shelters, or out in the open. One died here of pneumonia, Lt LEVITT A BECK, O-78286. The rest went on to M.-STAMM LAGER LUFT 3, after questioning by the GESTAPO.

7. The gates of the small camp are still closed. Armed guards - inmates from the big camp - stand at the barbed wire. The small camp did not participate in the huge parade of freedom (FREIHEITSAPPELLE) arranged on the morning after the liberation of BUCHENWALD. For, to many of the self-styled aristocrats of the big camp these are all "bandits". That they represent a problem for the camp cannot be denied. Some are in fact "bandits", criminals from all Europe or foreign workers in Germany who were caught stealing. All are hungry, as the inmates of the big camp were never hungry. The "bandits" carry lice and disease to a greater extent than the other inmates. They seek to break out of the terribly crowded corner of the camp in which they are, into the more comfortable clean blocks of the main part. They are brutalized, unpleasant to look on. It is easy to adopt the Nazi theory that they are subhuman, for many have in fact been deprived of their humanity. It would be easy to continue favoring the big camp in the distribution of food, as has been done in the past, and, more important for the wretches of the small camp, in the distribution of medicine.

I. THE TRANSPORTS

1. The transport system was begun in October 1942. to meet the increasing demands of the German war machine for raw manpower. The first transport was sent from BUCHENWALD to DORA, where tunnels were dug for an underground factory. Later this installation was called Concentration Camp MITTELBAU, and housed slave workers for the MITTELBAU AG, which ran the factory. (DORA is located near NORDHAUSEN). Other transports still in German-held territory are listed in the appendix. As may be seen, many of the transports served synthetic gasoline factories. A large proportion is in the area North West of BUCHENWALD, the so-called

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prohibited zone (SPERRZONE). The entire area centered around NORDHAUSEN and SANGERSHAUSEN is a nest of underground factories producing munitions and secret equipment. BUCHENWALD, too, had its munitions factory, located in the middle of the camp. In August, 1943 this was bombed by the Allies. The entire factory was destroyed, while the barracks lying immediately around it were virtually undamaged. This bombardment was used as an excuse for the murder of ERNST THAELMANN, the famous German Communist leader, though THAELMANN had never been in BUCHENWALD.

J. OHRDRUF

1. Eight thousand evacuated inmates of the OHRDRUF camps (OHRDRUF-NORD and OHRDRUF-SÜD) arrived in BUCHENWALD about a week ago. Hundreds died or were killed as unfit to go further when they reached BUCHENWALD, before the column proceeded East again. The OHRDRUF camps, known as TRANSPORT or KOMMANDO S-3, were established to dig tunnels. These were to be used as housing for the most important departments of the German government, and as emergency shelter for the train which contains HITLER'S Hq (FUEHRERHAUPT-QUARTIER). About ten days ago the FUEHRER train was at OBLERHOF, South of CRAWINKEL.

2. About twelve days ago a conference was held at OHRDRUF, attended by Camp Commandant STIEBITZ, Dr VON SCHULER, and a Major General, and caused by the disruption of communications with BERLIN. The subject was the disposal of the prisoners. Schemes suggested, and abandoned as "technically unfeasible", included gassing or blowing them up in the tunnels. Two days later a letter was received from BERLIN with instructions from HIMMLER. These were to the effect that: "I leave it within your discretion to kill all criminals and perhaps certain important political prisoners." This ambiguous order left STIEBITZ confused. He finally decided to attempt to evacuate the whole camp. The evacuation began the next day.

ANNEX AREPORT ON CONCENTRATION CAMP BUCHENWALD (ATROCITIES)

The camp was erected in July 1937. The first prisoners came in various transports from the SACHSENBURG and LICHTENBURG camps. The prisoners were political and criminal arrestees, as well as Jehovah's witnesses, (BIBELFORSCHER). During the period of development, up to about March 1938, most of the deaths occurred from shooting during "attempted flight" as a result of mistreatment by the SS and the most impossible work and wage conditions.

The mass deliveries of prisoners in May-June 1938, mostly "work shy" Germans and Jews, led to a rise in the death-rate, which at the end of the year was 10% of all inmates.

As a result of the assassination of Legation-Secretary vom RATH in PARIS, 12,500 Jews were delivered to BUCHENWALD and placed in 5 temporary barracks. All articles of value were stolen from them. 70 went mad during the first night as a result of mistreatment. Several hundred of them died, especially from TYPHUS. They were entirely without water and sanitary arrangements.

The first foreign prisoners came to BUCHENWALD in Sept 1938 as a result of the occupation of Austria. The following were liquidated in the stone-quarry by means of so-called shooting for attempted flight: the son-in-law of the former BUNDESPRAESIDENT MIKLAS GERTES, Minister of Justice WINTERSTEIN, Prison-Governor TRUMMER, HEIMWEHR leader and GENERALKONSUL STEIDLE, Major HOFFERN, SICHERHEITSDIREKTOR of LAND SALZBURG BECHINIE, among others.

The first Czech prisoners arrived after the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

When the war broke out in 1939, 2,500 Jews came to BUCHENWALD from VIENNA. Many of them had been dragged out of Old People's Homes. They were housed in tents in an open field and placed under command of SS men BLANK and HINKLEMAN. On 16 Oct, 2,000 Poles and Polish Jews were stuffed into this special camp. It was clearly the intention to liquidate them all. 104 so-called Polish Francs-Tireurs were placed among them in a cage 30 meters square. They received daily 150 gm bread and 1/2 liter watery soup. Within one month all but one of the "Francs-Tireurs" were dead. When the special camp was broken up, 12 Feb 1940, there were 2,000 alive out of 5,300 Poles and Jews.

On the occasion of the attempted assassination at the BUEHRER-BRAEUKELLER in MUNICH, 21 Jews were chosen to be shot. Then all the Jews had three days starvation and close confinement. A few days later food was taken from the whole camp for five days.

As a result of this continued under-nourishment there was, especially in the special camp, an epidemic of dysentery, lasting several months and causing 1,200 deaths.

In August 1940, 1,100 new Poles came to the special camp. On the first occasion that they were put to work in the stone quarry, 11 of them were shot. Within five months their number had dropped to 300. As reprisals for some happening outside the camp, Poles were repeatedly chosen out and publicly hanged as a warning, on one occasion 25 at once.

In Feb 1941, 400 Dutch Jews were delivered, transported on to GUSEN near MAUTHAUSEN and there liquidated.

In August 1941, the murder of a Jew named HAMPER by SS OSCHA

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ABRAHAM led to the death of all 30 eye-witnesses, because the brother of the murdered man had dared to speak of the real cause of his death.

In the Summer of 1941, the Camp doctor, EISELE, murdered hundreds of prisoners suspected of TB with injections of EVIPANNATRIUM. EISELE also carried out vivisections on healthy subjects.

From lists prepared by Criminal Secretaries SERNE and LECLAIR of the Political Department, two transports of criminal and political prisoners were taken to SONNENSTEIN near PIRNA and killed in experiments with poison gas.

In March 1942, four transports of 90 Jews apiece were sent to the HEIL UND PFLEGEANSTALT BIRNBERG, where they died a violent death under supervision of Dr EBERLE. Only their ashes were returned, which the prisoner MARKUS had to put into urns. After completing this job he was executed by Oscha PLISSNER.

The shooting of Russian prisoners of war began in March 1941. An estimated 6 - 7,000 were killed in the stables by means of a shot in the back of the head. To those concerned in this there belonged among others: Hptm TAUPRATSHOFER, Oscha BERGER, Hptm SCHAEFER, Uscha KELZ, Oscha BRUNO MICHAEL. In the case of those who were strong physically, execution was delayed to let them work in the quarry.

On order from Stand. F. and Camp-Commandant KOCH, who was responsible for all crimes mentioned above, the German political prisoners KRAEMER and PEIZ, who had run the camp hospital until 30 Oct, were shot in GOSLAR.

Since Dec 1941 it was common practice to use prisoners for typhus experiments in the typhus experiment-station in Block 46. Those responsible for this experiment-station were Dr DING and Dr HOVEN (STANDORTARZT).

The lack of German workers led, from Oct 1941 on, to the use of prisoners on war-important building and in armament works. As a result, thousands of workers were brought from occupied territories by force to concentration camps. We should mention especially the mass-transports of French workers, who were used in the development of the so-called DORA camp (later called MITTELBAU), near NORDHAUSEN and the LAURA camp. They died in masses after a few days. 30,000 prisoners were moved to MITTELBAU from BUCHENWALD. The camp doctor there was Ostuf Dr PLATZA and the commandant was Stubaf POERSCHNER. The commandant of LAURA, where the death-rate was 10% monthly, was Ustuf PLAUL.

Comparable extermination centers were and are SIII near OHRDRUF, BII near HALBERSTADT, MAGDEBURG and WIIIE (?) near ZEITZ.

Prisoners who had become incapable of work through the bad conditions, were sent in mass transports to AUSCHWITZ and later to the transit-camp BERGEN-BELSEN, where they were liquidated.

30,000 women were used in the work. While Aryan women, when pregnant, were sent to Camp RAVENSBRUECK for an abortion, Jewish women were sent to AUSCHWITZ or BERGEN-BELSEN to be gassed.

Jewish and Gypsy children considered unable to work were also sent on extermination transports to AUSCHWITZ and BERGEN-BELSEN.

Through evacuations from the big camps at COMPIEGNE, AUSCHWITZ and GROSS ROSEN to BUCHENWALD, the death-rate rose enormously. On a transport from AUSCHWITZ (AUSSENKOMMANDO BUNA) 47 of 5,000 died on the way. On transports from COMPIEGNE the prisoners were partly

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forced naked 100 men to a car. Since they were without water or ventilation, 63 men suffocated.

Bombardment of the armaments works at BUCHENWALD on 24 August 1944 was used as an excuse to execute the Communist Deputy ERNST THAELMANN. THAELMANN had never been at BUCHENWALD.

Camp strength on 1 Apr 45 was 80,813
Of these about 34,000 were working in armaments works outside the camp.

After the Allied Forces approached, an attempt was made to move the whole camp. About the following number were evacuated:

3 April - supposedly to THERESIENSTADT 1,500
5 April - Jews, place unknown 3,105

On 6 Oct 44 about 22,080 prisoners of all nationalities were transported, supposedly to FLESSENBUERG and DACHAU.

When the SS guards pulled out about 20,000 prisoners remained. Of these there are about 3,150 under treatment in the hospital and 4,800 old people, invalids and children.

The following groups of prisoners from BUCHENWALD are in areas not yet liberated (sic):

Firma ERLA, LEIPZIG	1,465
" HASSAG, LEIPZIG & TAUCHA	543
" MANSFELD, WANSLEBEN & ROTHENBURG	1,461
" WERNIG-WERKE, WERNIGERODE	502
" JUNKERS, BETRIEB SCHOENEBECK, HALBERSTADT, ASCHERLEBEN, WESTEREGELN, LEOPOLDSHALL	2,500
Firma BRABAG, TROEGLITZ	2,211
" HASSAG, BETRIEB ALTENBURG, COLDITZ, MEUSELWITZ & LEIPZIG	2,623
Firma FLOESSBERGER METALLWERKE	1,163
" LEOPARD, PLOEMNITZ	1,047
" G.E. REINHARDT, SONNEBERG	468
" WAGGONFABRIK DESSAU	338
" BRUNS APPARATE BAU, GANDERSHEIM	519
" MALACHYT BII, HALBERSTADT	4,723
" A-6, WANSLEBEN	570
" SCHALBE, V VERKA	1,770

Since the founding of the camp there have been, according to death certificates of the camp doctor 32,705 deaths.

This does not include mass executions of prisoners of war, nor executions which took place around the crematorium.

Death Rate from 1 April 1945

<u>Average No Prisoners</u>	<u>Arrivals</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Jan 61,000	22,906	6,407
Feb 62,000	12,581	5,614
Mar 82,000	3	5,479
Apr 3-10		915

Hanged in March	16
For the Germans	WALTER BARTEL
For the Russians	IWAN SMIRNOW
For the Czechs	JOSEF FRANK
For the French	MARCEL PAUL
For the Italians, Spanish, Belgians	DOMINICO CINFOLI

Commandant of the Inmates: HANS EIDEN